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**BSU backs off community college plan**  
**Two-year school in Valley likely in the near future**

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Boise State University won't open a community college in Boise or its BSU-West campus in Canyon County in January, as it originally had hoped.

The community college would have provided an alternative for students who might not get into the four-year college. BSU expects to continue denying admissions as it did this year by turning away more than 800 students for fall.

BSU raised hopes throughout the Treasure Valley earlier this year that it would start a fledgling two-year school at both campuses. Creation of a community college was the top concern at Mayor Dave Bieter's Education Summit in January.

But questions of financing and legislation that could lead to establishing a statewide community college system caused BSU to back off its original opening date.

"We determined that we would not be opening the community college in January 2006," said Sona Andrews, BSU provost and vice president for academic affairs. "It would serve everyone's interest if we delayed that to look for a better solution for the state of Idaho."

The BSU-West campus still will be used, even though it won't be used as a community college. About 1,800 BSU students will use the building this year.

Community colleges are different from four-year universities. They offer students a lower-cost education and open admission, meaning students aren't turned down based on their academic record. Community colleges also are work force training schools that can provide local businesses with skilled employees for their jobs.

BSU helped raise the need for a community college, and the project won't languish for long, Bieter predicted. "Even a year ago, before they really took the banner, it wasn't on the radar like it is now," he said. "While we would all like to see it sooner, we think we will see it in the near future."

A community college would be a vital part of the Treasure Valley's economic development, said Nancy Vannorsdel, Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce president and CEO.

But "as excited as everyone is, we have to do it correctly," she said.

BSU envisioned opening a community college with a couple of hundred students and a lower fee than is charged at the university. But to serve the community and meet demand, the school likely would have to open with about 1,000 students, Andrews said.

"We determined that there is a gap between what students would pay and what students would need," she said. "We came to the realization that the goal was unrealistic given the magnitude of what we wanted to accomplish."

At the same time, state Rep. Ann Rydalch, R- Idaho Falls, proposed a statewide community college system that would put as many as four two-year schools under control of the state.

Idaho currently has two community colleges, College of Southern Idaho in Twin Falls and North Idaho College in Coeur d' Alene.

Rydalch's proposal calls for adding community colleges in Idaho Falls and Canyon County.

With a statewide discussion brewing, BSU decided to wait to see how those talks play out, Andrews said.

"We are continuing to work on this," Andrews said. But this should not be a case of Boise State "just going off and doing its own thing."

To offer story ideas or comments, contact reporter Bill Roberts at [broberts@idahostatesman.com](mailto:broberts@idahostatesman.com) or 377-6408.